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THE POLISH CONSPIRACY

Full Story of the Polish-Goebbels Plot to save Hitler,
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BY

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The Polish Conspiracy

The Plan to Save Hitler Germany

AT Stalingrad the main strategy of Fascist Germany in its bid to conquer the world was brought crashing in ruins. The German plan to deprive the Red Army of its offensive power, and then to turn to the West in order to impose a Fascist peace on the world, was decisively routed. Stalingrad and Rostov, El Alamein and Tripoli, created fresh bright prospects of a speedy ending of the war and the complete destruction of Nazi Germany. The Casablanca Conference held out the promise that within the next nine months Britain and America would profit by the opportunity created by the Red Army's winter victories to launch an offensive in Europe "on the widest scale."

The Second Front was still delayed, and the delay enabled the German army partly to restore its military situation in the South; yet, in spite of this, the Alliance of the democratic peoples against Fascism grew steadily stronger. Such was the situation when the German Government early in 1943 laid its new and well-planned conspiracy to snatch a victory from what appeared to be a desperate position. The conspiracy was planned on so large a scale that no kind of concealment was possible. The basic aim was to recreate throughout the world by a flood of anti-Bolshevik diplomatic activity and propaganda the conditions which had made possible Munich and all other previous Fascist successes; the main weapon was that "bolshevik bogey" which had already served Fascism so well.

This point was made very clear by Joseph Stalin in his 1943 May Day Order of the Day:—

"To judge from reports in the foreign press, one can conclude that the Germans would like to obtain peace with Britain and the U.S.A. on the condition that the latter break with the Soviet Union; or, on the contrary, that they would like to obtain peace with the Soviet Union on the condition that it breaks with Britain and the U.S.A. Treacherous to the marrow themselves, the German imperialists have the insolence to measure the Allies by their own yardstick, expecting one or other of the Allies to swallow the bait."

The plot hatched by Goebbels to save Germany from total defeat aimed at nothing less than the mobilisation of all reactionary elements in Europe—and all the dark forces throughout the world that feared the results of Hitler's defeat—with the object first of delaying the Allied blow in the West and, secondly, of arranging a peace that would make the world safe for Fascism.

How was this aim to be achieved?

In the first place by a foreign diplomacy and Press and Radio campaign concentrating on three main themes: "the defence of European civilisation against Bolshevism"; the impregnability of Germany's defences in the West; the impossibility of the Allied Nations becoming sufficiently united to defeat Germany for many years to come.

In the second place, by a concentration of Nazi propaganda fire against the known weak places in the structure of the democratic alliance. The battles of 1942 and 1943 had proved that the "invincible German soldiers" were very far from invincible; the invincible German liars of Goebbels' Propaganda Ministry were called on to see if they could do better.

The main instrument in the plot was the propaganda machine which Goebbels controlled—the most dangerous ever possessed by any tyranny in the history of mankind. All its resources were set to work. The whole Press of Fascist-occupied Europe, the hundreds of broadcasting stations sending out "one o'clock news" and "nine o'clock news" to Europe's 350 million people, applied themselves day and night to this one end. At least a dozen "news" agencies, and powerful short-wave stations broadcasting a non-stop service to Africa, India, the Near East, the Far East, South America, the United States and Australia, carried the poison abroad.

Earlier incidents: Polish blackmail attempts against the Soviet Union

In order to understand the full significance of the act by the Polish Government which caused the breach, it is necessary to review briefly earlier Polish attempts to extort territorial concessions from the Soviet Union. Little more than a month earlier the Polish Government in London, and its agents in Allied countries, started an agitation for the settlement of its claims to the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. These are non-Polish territories, the one a part of the Soviet Byelorussian Republic and the other a part of the Soviet Ukrainian Republic. Filched from the Soviet Union by the imperialist Pilsudski in 1920, at the period of the young Soviet Republic's weakness, they were restored to the Soviet Union by the Red Army in 1939, when the government of Rydz-Smigly and Colonel Beck had fled from Poland into hospitable Rumania, leaving their country undefended against the Nazi hordes. The Polish Government chose recently to announce, at a critical time when the Soviet Union was still bearing almost the entire weight of the struggle on land against Nazi Germany, that

it considered the Polish-Soviet agreement concluded in 1941 as maintaining the territorial status quo of 1939.

Polish duplicity in relation to the Soviet Union is of long standing. When in 1920 the Soviet Government made an offer of peace to the Poles, the Poles expressed willingness to enter into negotiations; but this is what Count Skrzynski, Polish Foreign Minister, had to say of this in his book, "Poland and Peace":—

"The Soviet proposals were not given any serious consideration. . . . When, however, parliamentary and democratic policy did not permit them to be left without an answer, the question of the place where the negotiations might be held was raised in such an offensive spirit that the whole question was stopped at that point."

This is what the late H. H. Asquith said in the House of Commons on August 10th, 1920, about the Polish-Russian situation at that time:—

"There was Poland six months ago, a population stricken with disease and famine, and, it is not an exaggeration to say, on the verge of national bankruptcy, and it was under these circumstances that she started this campaign. Her avowed object was to get rid of the comparatively limited frontier, not an ungenerous frontier . . . and to go beyond it to the ancient boundaries of Poland of 1772. As I say, it was a purely aggressive adventure. It was a wanton enterprise."

Even at the time of the signing of the Soviet-Polish agreement, when hope was widely felt and expressed that the Polish Government had determined on a good-neighbourly policy towards the Soviet Union, there were elements in the Polish emigre Government in London which fought to prevent the signing of the agreement. The Polish War Minister, General Sosnkowski, resigned when the agreement was signed, and—such was the strength of the elements he represented—was at once offered another high position by Sikorski.

Throughout the entire period since the signing of this agreement the Polish Press has continuously published remarks which might have come straight from the pen of Dr. Goebbels. *Mysl Polska*, organ of the Polish National Party, a paper which scarcely troubles to disguise its anti-Soviet policy and publishes open anti-semitism of a nature that would cause any English newspaper to be suppressed, writes the following, for example:—

"The entry of the U.S.S.R. into Europe would create grounds for eternal conflict. Russia is a Eurasian not a European Empire."

The Alter and Ehrlich anti-Soviet agitation

During February and March, 1943, Polish emigre politicians both in Britain and America conducted a widespread campaign

to rouse public indignation against the execution of two Polish Bundists, Alter and Ehrlich. In Britain this agitation had only a limited success. It was possible, however, for the Polish elements leading the campaign to hold a public meeting in London attended by 500 people in memory and honour of these two Polish would-be quislings who were executed for spreading propaganda among the Soviet troops in favour of a separate peace—and this, too, in December, 1941, during the most critical period of the Red Army's single-handed struggle with German Fascism. In America the agitation was worked up to greater proportions and such diverse elements as the Hearst Press, the *Wall Street Journal*, and certain American isolationists and leaders of the American Federation of Labour rushed to take part in it. The Polish National Council in London saw fit to issue a statement denying the treachery of Alter and Ehrlich and raising doubts as to "the fate of those thousands of Polish citizens deported to the depths of Russia concerning whom the Soviet authorities have not yet given sufficient explanation."

Ground softened for Goebbels

It was in this way that the ground was softened for the new bid to wreck the unity of the Allied camp which the German Propaganda Ministry made on April 11th of this year. On this day the German Transocean agency launched its masterpiece of anti-Soviet fabrication against the weakest spot in Allied relationships. It announced:—

"10,000 Polish officers—the entire Polish officer corps—has been discovered shot dead through the nape of the neck in the Katyn Wood near Smolensk. The German military authorities, acting on information supplied by the local population, had excavations conducted at the O.G.P.U. Recreation Home near Smolensk *early this month*. A mass grave was discovered, 28 m. by 16 m., in which, in twelve layers, 3,000 Polish officers in full uniform were buried face down with their hands tied. They had been shot dead in *February and March, 1940*. These officers *could all be identified*, as the O.G.P.U. men left credentials on their bodies."

This broadcast did not, of course, explain why the German military authorities, during the period of nearly two years in which they had been in occupation of the Smolensk region, had never before come into possession of this highly useful and convenient "information which was in the hands of the local population." As the Moscow Radio later commented, this Goebbels atrocity story, this "hideous frame-up," came into the world with all the typical hall-marks of a hundred other exposed Gestapo fabrications:—

"With the much-too-fresh bodies of their victims buried in Soviet soil, with their carefully preserved diaries, with their false witnesses and their shady investigators, they have overshot the mark."

Later versions of the Smolensk massacre fable

The need appears to have been soon felt in Berlin to tidy up and improve on this first botched-job of a story. During the succeeding days, when all Axis and Axis-controlled radio stations talked of little else the story began to be told in different forms almost from hour to hour.

On April 12th *Transocean's* Special Correspondent, Robert Broese wrote that he was "able to assure General Sikorski" that he was waiting in vain for the return of 900,000 Polish officers and men . . . he had just returned from Smolensk, "where no fewer than 10,000 officers lie buried in one grave like dead dogs."

On April 13th the heat was turned full on and the story was put out in endless repetition and with elaborations by the score. The German Home News, at 10 a.m., stated that "the murders were carried out *between March and May*, 1940, and went on to broadcast the following characteristic details:—

"Less than five hundred yards from the mass graves the Bolsheviks (later: "the Bolshevik male and female officials") held orgies. The area had been hedged in with barbed wire and was constantly guarded by O.G.P.U. men. To carry out the mass murder the Bolsheviks cleared a part of the wood of trees. Firs were planted on the graves and are now three years old (other broadcasters considered that abandoned vodka bottles provided a more convincing proof of Soviet authorship). The state of decomposition of the bodies agrees with this time check and with the statements of the local population. The wood of Katyn has at last revealed its terrible secret. Jewish bolshevism shows the world its horrible grimace. The discovery of Smolensk is a stirring warning to Europe and a roll-call for an unrelenting struggle against the most terrible enemy humanity has ever encountered."

A comparison of the answers given by the German Press and Radio at different times to various natural questions about the story will prove indisputably where it was concocted.

Who discovered the bodies, and when?

"Polish lumbermen": Minister Braun von Stumm, Spokesman of the German Foreign Office, 13.4.43.

"An old peasant": German Home Service, 16.4.43.

"A German military lieutenant": German Home Service, 14.4.43.

"Early this month": *Transocean*, 11.4.43.

"The autumn of 1942": *Deutschlandsender*, 14.4.43.

(What sense of modesty prevented Dr. Goebbels from telling the world for six whole months?)

[It was left to the Editor of the notorious paper *Truth* to provide the Doctor with an alibi, as follows: "Germany has used the incident with skill. She must have known of the graves in the forest for a long time, but has waited until what her diplomats and propagandists regard as the crucial moment to force the present split."]

"The summer of 1942": *Deutschlandsender*, 14.4.43.

This last account is worth quoting:—

"Four Polish transport men, having heard of the murders from the local people, went into the forest with picks and spades. Shortly afterwards they returned, some utterly broken, and some shaking with indignation, and said they had found the place of the murders. Evacuation began *at once* (i.e. in the summer of last year) . . . wherever one dug there were corpses . . . all the area between the pits has not been evacuated, but there can be no doubt that the burial place covers the whole hill where new trees have been planted."

Could the bodies be identified?

"Members of the Polish delegation (i.e. Polish quislings brought by the Germans from Warsaw) recognised the faces of many of the high Polish officers whom they knew."—German Home Service, 14.4.43.

"A great stench arises from this mass of partly decomposed and partly mummified humanity . . . no features could be discerned . . . even old experienced officers held handkerchiefs before their noses."—Calais in English for England, 14.4.43.

"Several hundred more names": *Weichsel Radio*, 18.4.43.

"It has been possible to identify 95 per cent. of the bodies."—21.4.43.

How many graves were there?

"A mass grave . . . in which 3,000 Polish officers in full uniform were buried": *Transocean*, 11.4.43.

"A mass grave . . . in which no fewer than 10,000 officers lie buried": *Transocean*, 12.4.43.

"Six similar graves have been discovered": *Donau Radio*, 12.4.43.

"Two great mass graves have so far been uncovered": Calais in English for England, 22.4.43.

Finally, a sort of mass grave hysteria seems to have seized on the German liars, and graves began to be discovered from one end

of Europe to the other. Mass-graves indeed there are, in every country in Europe where the German Fascists have set their heel, and it has been well known to the whole world for some time who makes these mass graves for the peoples of Europe. Oslo Radio reported on April 21st that "Germans from the Baltic States" had witnessed the opening of a mass grave at Riga, and were able to testify that "the bodies were all members of the upper and middle class, and their fate is a warning of what will happen to those classes in Western Europe if the Bolshevik plague should ever gain the upper hand."

The same source reported the discovery of another grave outside Odessa. Here, too, the same forger's recipe could be recognised; here, too, local inhabitants were suddenly inspired to inform the Rumanian military authorities that "there were O.G.P.U. graves close by", and the Rumanian authorities ordered digging to begin at once. The graves were four years old, it was announced, and contained from 4,000 to 5,000 corpses. (It will readily be recalled that it was at Odessa that one of the worst pogroms of all time was carried out: 50,000 Jews, the entire Jewish population of the town, were put to death by the Gestapo after the Red Army withdrew from the town late in 1941.)

Other discrepancies

German propaganda was unable to stick to one story even about precisely how the execution was carried out. In the original version, *all* the victims were shot neatly and symmetrically through the nape of the neck. But such was the Nazi zeal for inventing convincing detail that before the week had passed at least three different methods were widely stated to have been used, as the following quotations will show:—

"Inhabitants in the neighbourhood . . . have stated that for some ten days the rattle of machine-guns and cries of terrified victims could be heard."

"Officers of the Polish General Staff were executed in a particularly cruel manner. They were shackled and then buried alive." "The corpses of the Polish officers showed the evidence of numerous bayonet stabs. These stabs were made with the typical Bolshevik four-edged military bayonet."

The two following statements were broadcast at the same hour on April 23rd:—(1) "Owing to the soil the corpses were mummified. The documents found on the bodies were almost intact because they had been impregnated with the grease of the bodies." (2) "The Polish Red Cross is expected soon to start identifying the bodies. This will be very difficult owing to the advanced stage of decomposition of the victims."

German Foreign Office angles for Polish Government support

During the whole period of the most intense concentration of German propaganda on the Smolensk massacre fable, Minister Braun von Stumm, spokesman of the German Foreign Office, was daily revealing to the Press Conference in Berlin the real purpose behind the story. On April 13th he "reminded correspondents of the Polish calculations that one and a half million Polish refugees and about 10,000 officers had fallen into Soviet hands. Despite pressing Polish inquiries, Moscow had refused to reply. Information on the fate of the 10,000 Polish officers was now being provided by the Germans instead." He added that the murdered Polish officers did not come from the Eastern Polish territories officially claimed by the Soviets, but came mostly from the Cracow and Warsaw districts. "This fact (!)—on the next day the German Home Service reported 'so far only 76 cases have been investigated'—was clear proof that the Soviets regard even these territories as of political, in other words annexationist, interest."

Polish Government demands "investigation"

On April 16th, four days after the Nazi propagandists had let their story loose, it was already perfectly clear to all the world what kind of a story this was. The signature of the stage-managers of the Reichstag Fire Trial, of the Polish atrocities against Germans in Western Poland, of the "Bolshevik massacres" at Lvov, and a hundred more forgeries long ago exposed and derided by the free world, was clearly written over the whole insidious tale. A Soviet statement issued on the previous day had summed up what was the general public reaction to the story throughout the world:—

"Beyond doubt Goebbels' slanderers are now trying by lies and calumnies to cover up the bloody crimes of the Hitlerite gangsters."

It seems likely, therefore, that the story would be allowed to run for a week or two, and replaced as soon as some fresher invention was ready to take its place in German propaganda. This, indeed, would certainly have been its fate, and it would have achieved nothing more than the further discrediting of its inventors, had not the Polish Government suddenly decided to accept Goebbels' story at its face value, and to use it for its own hostile campaign against the Soviet. On April 16th the Polish official newspaper in London, *Dziennik Polski*, wrote:—

"The fate of the Polish officers who were in the Kozielsk and Starobyelsk camps is unknown, and is the subject of the greatest concern to the Polish people."

Later in the same day the Polish Ministry of National Defence announced that the Polish Government "is asking the International Red Cross to send an investigation committee to Poland to investigate the graves." The communique explained, after a long series of allegations about the "disappearance" of certain Polish officers in the Soviet Union, that the "detailed information given by the Germans necessitates the approach to the Red Cross with a request for an investigation."

Fifty minutes later the Berlin radio came on the air with the news that Hitler also had appealed to the International Red Cross to investigate the graves. And on the following morning Donau Radio stated that "Berlin welcomes the appeal of the Polish emigre Government to the Geneva Red Cross." Many other broadcasts emphasised the "deep satisfaction caused in Germany by the Polish Government's request." As if to place their provocative intentions in no doubt, the Polish National Council followed this up on the next day with a resolution declaring that "it did not believe" the Soviet statement on the reasons for the execution of Ehrlich and Alter given by the Soviet Information Bureau *seven weeks before*. The Polish Cabinet, after a meeting held on the same day, stated in an official communique:—

"There is no Pole who would not be deeply shocked by the news of the discovery near Smolensk in a common grave of massacred bodies of the Polish officers missing in the U.S.S.R. and the mass execution of which they have become victims . . ."

Pravda warning

In a leading article published on April 19th, the following was *Pravda's* comment on this insulting Polish appeal:—

"Slander spreads quickly. . . . The Polish ministerial circles should have known that this is not the first time that the Hitlerite liars have resorted to this form of pressure on public opinion."

After recalling the full and circumstantial disproof which the Soviet Information Bureau had been able to publish in 1941 concerning the so-called victims of Bolshevik terror at Lvov, *Pravda* went on:—

"A similar foul piece of Hitlerite provocation has now once again been fabricated. As has now become perfectly clear, the Germans captured former prisoners of war who in 1941 were engaged on building construction in the area west of Smolensk, and who together with many Soviet citizens living in the Smolensk region, fell into the hands of the German Fascist hangmen in the summer of 1941, after the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from the Smolensk area." . . . "The more details they present, even including visiting cards which they themselves put with great

foresight into the pockets of the savagely tortured officers, the more clear it becomes that the Hitlerite hangmen are describing their own rich experience."

"The appeal of the Polish Ministry," *Pravda* went on, "cannot be regarded as anything but direct and open support of the Hitlerite provocateurs in the fabrication of their foul inventions. The Polish people will turn their backs on them as persons who encourage Hitler, the accursed enemy of Poland."

A success for Goebbels

During the week following April 17th Axis propaganda was whipped up to new heights of fury and mendacity in an attempt to make the very most of this gift from the Polish Government. In Poland the Polish partisans and patriots were fighting the German hordes, wrecking trains daily, ambushing convoys, sabotaging the Nazi war factories, fighting in alliance with the Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Yugoslavs and all other Eastern European peoples a deadly battle with the Fascist enslavers. But in London the emigre Polish Government chose just this moment, on the eve of the decisive battles of the war, to volunteer for the anti-bolshevik legion. Many a Polish fighter for freedom inside Poland, hearing on the German radio and in the *B.B.C.'s Polish service* the full story and attempted justification of the Polish Government's treacherous act, must have determined in his heart that the Polish Junkers and near-Fascists should never be allowed to return to Poland when the struggle against Hitler had been won.

The official British attitude was that all that had happened was a "dispute" between two allied Governments, and this neutral policy was strictly adhered to in all British news broadcasts to Europe, with the exception of the Polish broadcasts which are controlled by the Polish Government. On April 16th the British Foreign Office had already refused to make any comment, on the ground that the matter was the concern only of the two allied Governments.

The Times, speaking after the breach, wrote on April 28th:—

"The general abstention from comment during the past ten days has not been sufficient to prevent an open breach, and may even have hastened it by allowing the hidden sore to fester . . . the action of the Polish Government ten days ago beyond doubt played, in fact though not in intention (! the Polish Government could not have been ignorant of the assistance it was in fact rendering to Germany) directly into German hands and followed precisely the course which German propaganda was designed to dictate."

Speaking in the House of Commons a few days later, the Foreign Secretary summed up the situation with the words: "Least said, soonest mended." Never has there been such a negation of diplomatic action, as this bland assumption that fundamental differences can be dissolved by ignoring them.

When, on May 7, M. Vyshinski, Soviet Deputy Commissar for Foreign Affairs, published to the world a detailed statement of espionage activities by Polish diplomats in the U.S.S.R., ostensibly engaged in charitable work among their compatriots, and in addition exposed the duplicity with which the Polish High Command had evaded its military responsibilities on the Soviet front, the Diplomatic Correspondent of *The Times* described it as regrettable that "a subordinate" should have undone the good impression created by M. Stalin's May Day Order of the Day. Comment of other Diplomatic Correspondents was so similar in character as to suggest that this also was a line suggested from on high.

Certainly Nazi hopes went much further than the immediate object of enlisting the support of the Polish Junkers in a joint anti-Soviet campaign. Their object was nothing less than to drive a wedge into the Allied coalition, to gain precious time in which to prepare for the Spring battles in the East and the West, and to prepare the ground for a "peace offensive" on a world scale.

It was no coincidence that it was on April 16th, the very day that the Polish National Council sent its request to the International Red Cross, that the most definite peace offer yet made by Fascism was put out on its behalf by the Spanish Foreign Minister Jordana. Speaking in the presence of the Argentine and Chilean Ambassadors, he stated that it was now quite clear that none of the belligerents could win the war, that the "Western and Central Powers" were exhausting themselves, and that every one of them, including the United States, would fall a "prey to Bolshevism" if the struggle were allowed to continue much longer. He concluded by expressing the willingness of the Spanish Government to mediate between the belligerents. The timing of this peace proposal to coincide with the Smolensk massacre agitation and the treachery of the Polish Government in London leaves no room for doubt that this was the climax of the sustained Axis "anti-bolshevik campaign", and that the Polish Government in London played a vital part in the attempt made by German Fascism and its supporters throughout the world to split the Allied camp.

It is interesting here to note that on April 21st the official Spanish news agency instructed all Spanish newspapers to publish suitable comment on the Smolensk story, "with special reference to the International Red Cross and the Polish Government in London."

The Soviet Union exposes the conspiracy

Such was the state of affairs which obliged the Soviet Government to break off relations with the Polish Government on April 25th. M. Molotov's note explained that:—

"The Soviet Government considers the recent behaviour of the Polish Government with regard to the U.S.S.R. as entirely abnormal and violating all regulations and standards of relations between two Allied States. The slanderous campaign hostile to the Soviet Union launched by the German Fascists in connection with the murder of the Polish officers which they themselves committed in the Smolensk area on territory occupied by German troops, was at once taken up by the Polish Government and is being fanned in every way by the Polish official press.

"Far from offering a rebuff to the vile Fascist slander of the U.S.S.R. the Polish Government did not even find it necessary to address to the Soviet Government any inquiry or request for an explanation on this subject. . . .

"For the 'investigation' both the Polish Government and the Hitlerite Government invited the International Red Cross, which is compelled, in conditions of a terroristic régime, with its gallows and mass extermination of the peaceful population, to take part in this investigation farce staged by Hitler. . . .

"The fact that the hostile campaign against the Soviet Union commenced simultaneously in the German and Polish press, and was conducted along the same lines, leaves no doubt as to the existence of contact and accord between the enemy of the Allies—Hitler—and the Polish Government.

"While the people of the Soviet Union, bleeding profusely in a hard struggle against Hitlerite Germany, are straining every effort for the defeat of the common enemy of the Russian and Polish peoples, and of all freedom-loving democratic countries, the Polish Government, to please Hitler's tyranny, has dealt a treacherous blow at the Soviet Union."

The Note went on to state that the Soviet Government was aware that the real purpose of this Polish collaboration with Hitler was to "wrest from it territorial concessions at the expense of the interests of the Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Lithuania."

"All these circumstances," the Note concluded, "compel the Soviet Government to recognise that the present Government of Poland having slid on to the path of accord with Hitler's Government, has actually discontinued allied relations with the U.S.S.R., and has adopted a hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union.

"On the strength of the above, the Soviet Government has decided to sever relations with the Polish Government."

Polish Government reply

The great majority of the British and American Press did not hesitate to condemn the action of the Polish Government. "On two simple counts," said the London *Evening Standard*, "we believe the Polish Government must be held responsible for the breach. First, they had no right to suppose that a German allegation might contain the truth. Second, they had no right to call for an investigation on territory occupied by the enemy." *The Times* reminded the Poles that they themselves had been victims of similar allegations from the same source:—

"Surprise as well as regret will be felt that those who have had so much cause to understand the perfidy and ingenuity of the Goebbels propaganda machine should have themselves fallen into the trap laid by it. Poles will hardly have forgotten a volume widely circulated in the first winter of the war which described with every appearance of circumstantial evidence, including that of photography, alleged Polish atrocities against the peaceful German inhabitants of Poland; and this gruesome and fantastic fabrication, neither the first nor the last of its kind, might have deterred them from treating at their face value accusations of a similar character when directed against others. . . . At no moment of the war, and at no moment of history, have the closest confidence and co-operation between Britain and Russia been more essential than now."

The viewpoint of the trade unionists of Britain was vigorously expressed at the Scottish Trades Union Congress by Mr. James Campbell, a member of the General Council, who said:—

"I say to the Poles in this country that, if they are going to use their sanctuary here to attack Russia, they will lose the sympathy of the organised working class of Britain, and our answer will be, 'You have outstayed your welcome'."

Yet the British Press partly disguised the seriousness of the matter by fairly consistently referring to it as a "dispute between two Governments." The only official comment available in London, even two days after the breach, was that "the Governments of Britain and the United States are endeavouring to alleviate a regrettable situation," and the Washington State Department announced on the same day that "without reference to the merits of the matter, and without knowing as yet the full facts, we learn of this development with regret."

Apparently emboldened by the over-tolerant attitude of the Allied Governments, the official Polish line did not become one whit more conciliatory, although it assumed an even more than usually hypocritical tone. In a statement issued on April 28th, the Polish Government declared that it aimed at "a friendly

understanding between Poland and Soviet Russia," but went on to give the lie to its own assurances by launching further innuendoes against the treatment of Poles in the U.S.S.R.

The Polish statement neither retracted its invitation to the International Red Cross nor withdrew the slanderous implications of this request. No action could have been better calculated to make the situation still worse, and Nazi propaganda hastened to profit by the policy which tolerated this new Polish provocation. In an attempt to suggest that the Polish Government enjoyed the support of the British and American Governments, Minister Braun von Stumm made another "discovery." In the archives of the French Foreign Office, he announced, a note had been found, dated May 18th, 1940, in which the British Ambassador "advised the French Foreign Office that the publication of a joint Anglo-Polish-French declaration condemning Russian atrocities in Poland was inopportune at that moment." This, he pointed out, was in May, 1940, "at the very time when the Smolensk massacre was taking place." On the same day Rome Radio celebrated "the first breach in the artificial structure of the United Nations."

The real Poland

The claims of the Sikorski Government to speak for the real Poland were demolished in an article in *Izvestia* written by Wanda Wassilevska, famous Polish writer, Deputy to the Supreme Soviet, and President of the Union of Polish Patriots in the Soviet Union:

"Whom does this emigre government represent? The Polish people? By no means. The Polish people neither elected, appointed, nor conferred powers on this government. The present Polish Government took over the functions of the remnants of the Rydz-Smigly Government which fled from Poland, the government of Poland's September defeat. . . .

"We have seen plainly through these people from the very outset. We have known that they differ only outwardly from those who brought disaster on Poland in 1939, that they are bound to these people by thousands of ties, ideological, personal, and traditional. . . .

"The Polish Government has made bargaining for frontiers its main task. But it bargains not for Polish lands occupied by the Germans, but for the land of Soviet Byelorussia, the Soviet Ukraine, and Soviet Lithuania, lands populated by our brother with whom the Polish people want to live in peace. . . . It was for these reasons that we Poles in the U.S.S.R. demanded that we be given an opportunity to take part in the war, arms in hand. When General Anders took his army away to the Middle East we demanded that Polish troops be formed on the territory of

the U.S.S.R., which would not stay for months in their tents, but would go to the front to smite the enemy shoulder to shoulder with the Red Army. The friendship of the Polish and Soviet peoples, cemented with blood in the joint struggle, is unshakable."

Stalin's pledge to Poland

When the Soviet-Polish agreement was signed, Stalin made a solemn statement to Sikorski that the Soviet Government wants to see a strong and independent Poland. The Soviet Government knows, as indeed the whole world must recognise to be the truth, that Poland will owe her liberation when it does come to the efforts of the Red Army, and of the patriots who are at present struggling against the Nazi yoke. Certain it is that if the ultimate aims shared by the German Nazis and the Polish Junker landlords were ever to be realised neither Poland nor any other of the Hitler-enslaved peoples would escape destruction. "A sharp jolt has been given," as the *Manchester Guardian* declared on April 29th, "to all of us who complacently thought that the necessity of winning the war would defeat any tendency to dangerous disunity." The conspiracy to save Fascism has suffered a reverse through the vigilant action of the Soviet Government in exposing some of its hidden friends. But the danger remains, and the people of Britain must in their own interests exercise a vigilance as sharp as that of our Russian allies. They must make it clear that they stand solidly with the Soviet Union against the Nazi-Polish plotters. They should demand that the British Government take up the firmest possible stand against this and any other attempts to drive wedges into the Alliance to destroy Fascism.

Until the decisive joint Anglo-American-Russian offensive is launched against Hitler Europe, until the Second Front is opened, it is certain that fresh plots will be hatched. Where it is a question of behaviour by any elements in the Allied camp which threatens the unity of the forces in this camp, it is impossible for anti-Fascists to take up a neutral attitude. The British people should demand that those exceptional press facilities granted to the Poles in London, and so wantonly abused by them, should be withdrawn. The emigre Government must withdraw the charges it has made, directly and by implication, against the Government of the U.S.S.R., whose heroic struggle provides the only guarantee of the emergence of Poland as a free nation in a free world.